

· THE GLEN SANDERS RESIDENCE ·
· SCOTIA · NEW YORK ·
Schenectady Co.

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· PHOTOGRAPHS ·
· WRITTEN · HISTORICAL · AND · DESCRIPTIVE · DATA ·
· DISTRICT NO. 5 ·

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· HISTORIC · AMERICAN · BUILDINGS · SURVEY ·
· NORMAN R. STURGIS · DISTRICT OFFICER ·
· 353 BROADWAY · ALBANY · N. Y. ·

THE GLEN SANDERS HOUSE
SCOTIA, SCHENECTADY COUNTY, N. Y.

The original Glen Sanders mansion, the first house to be built on the north bank of the Mohawk River, was situated in what is now the town of Scotia, about opposite the present city of Schenectady. The present house was erected by Alexander Glen in 1713, and lies a few rods north of the site of the earlier homestead, which was built about the middle of the Seventeenth Century. While it has undergone some minor repairs and alterations, it still exists generally as originally built.

There is no reliable authority for advancing the theory that the south-west part of the building was built before 1713 and the present east section added in that year, but investigation of the roof framing showed an independent system for each section of the present L-shaped building, which more or less supports this theory. The east section of the first floor, now sub-divided into three rooms, was originally one great living room.

Sir William Johnson was entertained here. James Duane, one time Mayor of New York City stopped with his bride Maria, niece of William Livingston, later Governor of New Jersey, when they visited and arranged to enlarge the paternal estate now known as Duanesburgh.

Washington was briefly entertained upon his second visit to Schenectady. The following authentic Indian story was told to him by John Glen, a private record of which was recorded by John Sanders, a great-great grandchild of the Robert Sanders who was Albany's Mayor in 1750:

"Schenectady was burned in 1690 by the French and Canadian Indians. An Ancient document filed in Albany that year in part reads: "The French and the Indians beset each house and after they had murdered the people they burned all the houses and barns, cattle, etc., except five or six which were saved by Capt. Sanders, to whom, they were kind as they had particular orders so to be by reason of the many kindnesses shown by his wife to the French prisoners."

In Canada they have carefully recorded the particular event, which was responsible for the orders to the Indians to spare the Sanders' house. The records read as follows:

"Toward the close of a quiet summer afternoon,

Capt. John Sanders(Alexander) Glen was at home with his family, enjoying the beauty of the river and lowlands which surrounded the Scotia house, when a large party of Mohawks, just returned from the north, arrived and prepared to camp below the mansion. They were in a high state of elation and triumph, having captured an important personage against whom they entertained extreme antipathy. He was a Roman Catholic Jesuit priest, and had been proselyting among them, which caused some to remove to Canada, about eighty of whom returned in 1690 with the French to burn Schenectady. These victorious savages soon announced to Capt. Glen and wife that they intended a special roast of their captive on the following morning. They brought the unfortunate priest along, for the Captain to lock up in his cellar until they should want him for their pious sacrifice.

The Captain and his wife did not see it in that light. Now Capt. Glen did own two keys to his locked cellar, and aware of the confidence the Mohawks placed in him, also of their credulity and superstition, raised this clear-sighted, well-intended, and formidable objection.

The Mohawks were his friends, and he felt pleasure at all proper times to oblige them, but in this case he would not take the responsibility. Priests were "wizards", and could go through any keyhole; suppose the priest was gone in the morning, what then? No, he should take no risk. But one thing he proposed with wise solemnity. They might lock him up and take the key themselves; this just proposition Mrs. Glen seconded. It was ratified, the poor priest placed in close quarters, and the key duly delivered to his captors.

Mr. Glen had also suggested, at the proper time, in a quiet way, and to the proper ears, that early in the morning, before daylight, he should send his team to Albany for salt, so as to excite no suspicions about movements contemplated. The Mohawks, as was customary after a campaign, got rum and feasted, drank, danced, shouted and sang until the wee small hours in the morning, when exhausted, they settled into stupid repose. This lull, Capt. Glen, his wife Anna, and faithful slaves having watched, they placed the priest on a wagon in a hogshhead with the lower head out, and the bung hole to breathe through, and with a good team, the priest and two negroes started for Albany after a load of salt. The priest was well and quietly received by the humanitarians of Albany, and silently forwarded to Montreal. Publicity, after such a joke on warriors, was impolitic, and the incident was seldom mentioned.

Morning came. The Mohawks, having an important

mission to perform, rose earlier than usual, and Mrs. Glen took the matter easy. The Mohawks found the cellar closed, but the priest flown. The Captain upon being questioned, only said to his friends: 'I told you so; priests are wizards;' and they reluctantly responded, Coudre (his Indian name) was right. Nor was it ever known that any pious Mohawk of that generation discovered the deception.

The Glen Sanders house has been occupied by and remained longer in possession of one family than any other in the State of New York. The first Robert Sanders was agent for Kiliaen Van Rensselaer in the days of the Dutch West India Company. The house is at present occupied by Mrs. Charles P. Sanders, a lineal descendent of Alexander Lindsay Glen; and Mr. J. Glen Sanders, her son, he being the eleventh generation from the original Glen.

Earle L. Kempton,
Author.